

**FROM: Kelly Brooks**  
**DATE: 11/10/2000**  
**TO: Caltrans Distribution List**  
**SUBJECT: Questions on BL 15**

I have been receiving questions from many of you regarding BL 15, POBE relationship, etc. In order to assist everyone, I have attached a summary of the questions that I have received - and the responses I have provided to date. Some of the questions may be redundant, but I wanted to include everything.

Update to receiving copies of SCO's Monthly Vacancy Report -- We have been told by SCO that these will not be available until the first week in December.

We are still working with SCO to receive confirmation that our positions filled in December (Dec 1-29) will be saved from abolishment per BL 15. I will keep you posted.

If you have any additional questions, please let me know. Hope this help.....THANKS

### **BUDGET LETTER 00-15 QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

#### **Question:**

***If SCO abolishes a position, they would take the funding. How would they know what type of funding to take? There are programs that have positions that are funded with federal and state dollars.***

#### **Response:**

If SCO targets a position for abolishment because it has been vacant for six consecutive monthly pay periods - DOF will take the funding and position authority as part of next year's budget development process. DOF will work with us at that time to determine how the position targeted for abolishment is funded - in order to reduce the correct fund source and program/district. Hopefully - this will not happen!!

#### **Question:**

***I am trying to find out about our unestablished positions in the POBE Database. When we receive a new position and I enter it into the database I am using the code "A - Authorized Unestablished Vacant Position" until there is an actual body in the position. With DOF's new policy of 6 month position abolishment, would these unestablished positions be considered in this process? Basically, does our clock start ticking at the time of entry into the POBE system? If so, should we enter these new positions before we get a body in them?***

### **Response:**

The clock starts ticking once SCO establishes the position. The "A" position status code in POBE is used when we receive a new position -- and the paperwork has not yet been processed through SCO (thus the definition is "Authorized but Unestablished"). Once SCO establishes the position - we should change the position status code in POBE to "V" -- still meaning vacant - but established via SCO. The clock now starts ticking. Then, of course, once the position is filled - you again change the status to "F" or "U" depending upon the situation.

The reason why we even enter the "A" positions into POBE was to allow the Districts/Programs to tie to their authorized staffing plan levels at the beginning of the fiscal year.

### **Question:**

***How is POBE being used during this Budget Letter 15 process?***

***If we abolish a position today, do they loose the dollars also?***

***How does the 230 position drill Rick worked on with DOF relate to this exercise?***

***A program has two positions with DPA for review, they are not established or filled Would they be cut?***

### **Response:**

1 - POBE is an internal tool for position management. For purposes of BL 15 -- DOF is relying exclusively on SCO's vacancy reports on established positions that have been vacant for six consecutive monthly pay periods. POBE has been modified to include a new field for vacancy date last paid - again to be used as a tool for us to monitor our vacancies.

2 - If a position is abolished today -- we will not lose the position authority or resources associated with it in our budget. We abolish positions all the time and we never lose the resources with it. The only time we would - is if SCO identifies the position on its 6 month vacancy report (similar to Section 41). SCO will notify DOF and DOF will take the position authority and resources away via next years' budget building process.

3 - The 230 position drill is related to BL 15 -- but not the 6 month vacancy part. We completed another exercise as part of this budget letter regarding our expenditures -- \$\$ and PYs for FY 99-00. Based upon this "drill" it became apparent that we, as a Department, were not expending all of our resources for staffing or otherwise. In addition (here's the POBE part), DOF reviews our monthly POBE report and the reports reaffirmed DOF's beliefs that we are not able to fill our positions by Program. DOF did indicate that they will work with us to look at any position identified for abolishment on SCO's vacancy reports compared to the 230 positions - so we do not get double-dinged.

4 - If you have positions over at DPA for review and they are not established with SCO as a valid position, then they are not subject to BL 15. Be careful -- if you are reclassifying two current vacant positions and the "new" positions are at DPA for review -- SCO probably has the old positions on the books as established and vacant. If the "old" positions are vacant for six months they will be subject to BL 15. If this is the case - abolish the old and wait for the new to get approved and establish new positions.

**Question:**

***Kelly, has your group decided how the vacant positions will be identified? Will you be getting a report from the SCO or our, Personnel Office that IDs the positions? Or are you planning to use the POBE database? Also, how do unauthorized positions fit into this equation? For instance, we are staffed-up to our authorized position level (4% vacancy factor), but we have a number of "unauthorized" positions that we use to help us spend salary savings. Some of these positions are vacant. To date, these positions are not reflected in the POBE database. However, our plan is to have them in POBE by December. We will ID them as "unauthorized". I would imagine these positions will be included in the "use it or lose it" scenario? If they aren't in the POBE, how will they be identified?***

**Response:**

SCO will be identifying the vacant positions since July 1 - based upon their database. The POBE database is internal only and will not be used for this purpose (thank god!). We have added a new field to the POBE for date a vacant position has been last paid - to help us keep track of the vacant positions subject to BL 15.

All of your positions - unauthorized or not - should be entered in POBE. Especially if they are filled! Not having them entered would really impact (negatively) our monthly POBE reports we share with DOF and the directorate. We would not be capturing all of our filled positions -- whether they are authorized or not!!! It also gives the program providing you resources a false impression - that may affect the personal services resources that they allocate to you. If all of your positions are not in POBE -- then they may not think you need the PS \$ for them! There is a code in POBE specifically for this purpose -- it is the "U" position status code -- but the U does mean that the position is filled - yet unauthorized. If the position was vacant and unauthorized, a program would envision that the District would abolish it -- so that is why we do not have a code for unauthorized vacant positions.

All positions established through SCO -- whether entered in POBE or not are subject to BL 15. If these positions are vacant for six consecutive monthly pay periods -- they will be abolished. Soooo - we need to do something with them now - even abolish them - so SCO does not "flag" these positions on their report to DOF then we will be forced to abolish the position and the resources that accompany it' If "we" are the ones to abolish the position - the position authority will be saved and the resources will not be lost through this 6 month vacancy process.

**Question:**

***OK Ms Kelly ... am I to understand your previous email to say that it is OK to abolish positions that are in jeopardy and NOT lose funding associated with those positions? In other words, we can reestablish at a later date? If so .... goody. We have been holding on some positions awaiting some definite direction. They are in the system to have a person put in but not in yet... if you know what I mean - in HQ Personnel but not in the system yet. Also, we just need to clean up some old positions (abolish). If not, then what is OK to proceed with?***

**Response:**

Yes -- Abolish those positions that are in jeopardy now to avoid losing the funding associated with them. For this Budget Letter, all that SCO will report to DOF will be those established vacant positions on SCO's records -- those that have been vacant for six consecutive monthly pay periods. If we abolish them, they will not be flagged with SCO thus DOF will never see these to cut the position authority and funding associated with it. We will create a new position when we are ready to fill.

If the positions you are holding -- are those coded "A" in the POBE database -- authorized but not yet established through SCO -- those positions are fine -- because the clock in SCO has not started ticking. You should just be really sure that Personnel has not processed the paperwork to start the clock....

We are definitely cleaning up all of those old positions that remain vacant and we are not filling.

**Question:**

***I have a question concerning POBE. It is my understanding that when a position is abolished, it is removed from the Position Management Report but it continues to show up in POBE as VACANT. This gives a distorted view of the number of vacancies we have. Can we remove the position from POBE once it has been abolished?***

**Response:**

If we abolish a position - please delete from POBE!

We do enter vacancies in POBE that are not established through SCO --- we code these with an "A" position status.

**Question:**

***What is the absolute drop dead date for the Districts to have a position that was vacant on 7-1-00 filled? Also, could you help us out with some of the definitions. For example, "filled". I assume that means actually on board. If the vacant position is "filled" on 12-22-00 is it protected? Pay would be issued for the position within the six month timeframe, albeit paid in January.***

***In a videoconference with the Maintenance Program today, we were told that positions subject to section 41 must be "filled" by 11- 10-00.***

**Response:**

The position workgroup agreed to use November 10 as a target date for having any PARF document to Personnel for processing (whether new hire, shell game of rotating staff through the vacant position, or abolish the position) that will ensure a vacant position will be paid out of the December pay period. This date was targeted to allow adequate PARF/607 processing time within Personnel and SCO. We were thinking of the worst case scenario. It is unclear how SCO will be reporting to DOF. If SCO reports on Jan. 1 that any position is vacant if not paid out of the December pay period, we wanted to be ready to have all of our positions covered. We are working with SCO to see how, when, and in what fashion, they will be reporting to DOF. Best case scenario, any position with an effective date up to 12/31/00 will be saved - even though the paperwork will be completely processed through SCO weeks after that date. Again, we need some definite answers from SCO in which we are working on. So, as far as a "drop dead" date, this date will be determined when we receive some final answers from SCO. This should be soon. Many departments are pushing them.

I agree with you - definitions need to be clarified. Filled to me means actually on board - I am sure externally it is viewed the same.